



Research and Reference Service

OVERSEAS REACTION TO THE CUBAN SITUATION
(As of 8 a. m.)

R-128-62 (A)

October 28, 1962

This is a research report, not a statement of Agency policy

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SUMMARY

Evidently, free world editors are too busy trying to keep up with the news to find time to comment on specific developments. They are using the quarterback's basic rule, "When in doubt, punt."

Most basic positions are unchanged and uncertain, including the Soviet propaganda output which continues to characterize Khrushchev as the great peacemaker. From the beginning of this situation, Soviet commentators have been notably lagging behind developments.

There is little independent comment so far about Khrushchev's Cuba-for-Turkey offer, although the Soviet propaganda apparatus is broadcasting it widely.

The Soviets have not mentioned the loss of a U.S. plane announced last night. TASS in English to Europe said that Cuban anti-aircraft batteries had forced back "unidentified military planes." This morning TASS stated that Castro would not allow foreign military planes over his territory. There has been no mention by the Soviets that we would continue and protect our reconnaissance flights.

South Korean papers continue their strong support of the U.S. position, warning that the crisis must be settled without appeasement or a deal for trading bases. Japanese papers continue to urge UN mediation. Peking staged a Cuba-crisis rally.

The Agence France Presse quotes "authoritative" British sources as believing the Soviet Union will have to stop base construction in Cuba before negotiations can be enlarged.

Cuba remains the top story in British papers, but increased attention is given the India-China conflict. The only significant commentary is in The Guardian, which states that if bombing or invasion of Cuba begins "the British government will have to make up its mind afresh about what it should do... matters will be very different if the U.S. takes to aggression."

WESTERN EUROPE

Comment from Western Europe continues to be favorable with some reservations.

Agence France Presse is distributing from Paris a dispatch attributed to "authoritative British sources" comments on Khrushchev's Turkey proposal. "The Soviet Union will have to stop its construction of missile bases in Cuba before the scope of East-West negotiations can be enlarged," said the press agency.

In France the press marked a diminution of tension of the Cuban situation, but saw settlement as still far off. The headlines said: France-Soir, "Kennedy has Scored the First Point. Detente on the Cuba Front;" Paris-Presse, "France Supports U.S. DeGaulle Optimistic about Cuba;" Figaro, "First Tactical Success for the U.S. The Two K's Ready to Negotiate Under Certain Conditions."

In London, the Cuba crisis still is getting dominant play in the Press. The Guardian leader comments on "When to Break Ranks." It states that if the Russians do not at least stop work on the missile sites that bombing or invasion may begin. If this happens, says The Guardian, the British government will have to make up its mind afresh about what it should do.

In West Germany a number of approving editorials say the President has won the first round, but stress the seriousness of the situation. The independent Die Welt says Washington is considering "total blockade" unless the rockets are removed in the next two weeks. If there is a chance for peace, says the newspaper, it lies exclusively in the determined attitude of the U.S. The left-center Frankfurter Rundschau is among the papers awarding the President the first round.

The right-center Frankfurter Allgemeine emphasizes that the overwhelming majority of Americans support the President. The paper says Khrushchev definitely made a mistake. The right-center Deutsche Zeitung admires the "marvelous precision" of the President's "quiet" preparation and timing which enhances Kennedy leadership of the West.

The pro-government Frankfurter Neue Presse approves U.S. initiative but worries about the possibility of a trade on bases. It

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warns, "Nothing would be more dangerous now than an attempt to clear the atmosphere by a poor compromise."

Finnish and Swedish comment is concerned with shipping restrictions on the high seas. The Helsinki domestic service gives full support to UN conciliation efforts and declares Finland adheres to the international principle that shipping in international waters should not be restricted in peacetime.

The Stockholm domestic service recommends that Swedish ship captains bound for Cuba should permit American searches but should protest and reserve the right to future proceedings and possible claims for damage.

Both Spain and Portugal released official statements to the press supporting the U.S. government position.

LATIN AMERICA

President Betancourt of Venezuela delivered an important speech on the Cuban crisis. He gives the view of his government that "no formula can be discussed with the Soviet Union without prior dismantling of the nuclear bases in Cuba." Stressing his government's belief that Soviet arms in Cuba are of an offensive nature threatening all of the Americas, Betancourt mobilizes the armed forces and asks for special vigilance and hard work from his country, pledging that he will maintain contact with all sectors of the populace on the matter.

From the Chile radio comes an up-to-date comment on the Turkey-for-Cuba bases proposal from the Kremlin. It characterizes the bid as "the most unusual proposal of the century" which has left Castro completely in the lurch. The radio comment quickly comes to the conclusion that "an invasion is imminent." The radio warns "Kennedy's rejection of the proposal has placed Cuba on the brink of an invasion or a bombardment and it is believed that an invasion is imminent."

There is some current scrambling to tie up loose domestic political ends in face of the crisis. In Brazil, party leaders have made efforts to resolve criticism of the official Brazilian support of the U.S. position, particularly by Brizola, governor of Rio Grande do Sul. In Argentina, the recently established "Club de la Libertad" has declared that official steps to meet the crisis should include the "release of all officers who are under arrest." In Colombia, the Foreign Minister released a special statement to counter "current rumors." He declared that Colombia wants peace and that the U.S. stand is aimed in reality "at avoiding war" over Cuba.

Pledges of support continue to come in from widely scattered areas in Latin America. The dock workers in Brazil have now withdrawn their threat of a walk-out against American shipping. Some violence involving anti-U.S. and anti-Castro groups is reported in Argentina and Bolivia. The army moved into La Paz to restore order after five were killed in yesterday's rioting.

CUBA

After Castro's invitation to U Thant to visit Havana and begin consultations, La Tarde in Havana writes editorially that "the United States is seeking an excuse to unleash a direct attack on Cuba at any minute." El Mundo too reports that "there is something even more serious, and it is that the rumors spread by U.S. government officials to the news agencies seem to indicate that Washington is not yet satisfied with its measures of force and is preparing new and more dangerous measures."

There is, however, no direct Cuban comment on Khrushchev's bid to remove bases in Cuba if U.S. bases in Turkey are dismantled.

In a continuing effort to present Cuba's case before a sympathetic audience, Fidel Castro wrote an article appearing in the Tunisian weekly Jeune Afrique in which he declared that Cuba was ready to negotiate an end to the present crisis, but wanted "concrete guarantees of nonaggression, supported by acts." Endeavoring to generalize the crisis, Castro wrote that the real U.S. fear was not of Cuban arms, but of "the consequences of the Cuban revolution on their economic monopolies in Latin America."

Cuba continues to report defensive preparations among the people, and threatens to shoot down any invading plane.

SOVIET BLOC

In the wake of Khrushchev's bases swap proposal, Soviet propaganda seems to be gearing up for an even more positive portrayal of Moscow's "love of peace, its mature presence of mind, its ability to find wise solutions for complicated problems." Even prior to the release of the Khrushchev letter, Soviet output was tending toward a more positive espousal of the Soviet "peace" line and a more detailed indictment of U.S. objectives and motives.

The Khrushchev message concedes, in effect, that there are Soviet missile bases in Cuba in order to strengthen Moscow's strategic posture. For the first time in any Soviet public statement, Khrushchev asserts that the means situated in Cuba are in the hands of Soviet officers, and that they would be used only in response to an attack on Cuba, the Soviet Union, or the Soviet Union's allies. The Soviet Union can, therefore, no longer insist that it has no bases overseas, a line which has long been prominent in propaganda output.

Material available to date shows no Soviet reaction to the President's reply to Khrushchev. Propaganda preceding the bases-swap proposal has reiterated a theme which came to the fore after the September 11 TASS statement on Cuba; namely the inconsistency allegedly existing between our concern over bases in Cuba and U.S. policy of maintaining bases all over the world. It can be anticipated that the Soviet Union now will stress its concern over other U.S. bases abroad to underline the reasonableness of Khrushchev proposal.

Soviet propaganda, so intent during the Cuban crisis to stir up world opinion against American actions on Cuba, can also be expected once more to play up the danger to nations having U.S. bases. Even before the bases-swap move, a clandestine Soviet radio station broadcasting to Turkey enlarged on the danger to that country posed by the presence of U.S. bases. Asserting that the U.S. has alerted its military forces and bases in Turkey, the commentator pointed out that Turkey would be a legitimate target of retaliatory attack if war broke out.

Reaction from the Soviet satellites to the Khrushchev message is too scattered this morning to draw any firm conclusions. Volume, intensity and tone of Bloc propaganda is heavy and persistent in stressing Soviet peace efforts.

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Hungary was among the first to react to the President's reply to Khrushchev. In pointing out the rapidity of the President's rejection of the swap idea it stressed that a number of American bases ring the Soviet Union.

Poland mentions the Khrushchev letter, but has said nothing so far about Mr. Kennedy's reply. East Germany says the Cuba-Turkey offer shows "far-reaching preparedness for understanding," stressing Soviet peacefulness and reasonableness in contrast to America's "un-reasoning warmongering."

Early Yugoslav reaction sees the President's "refusal to accept" the bases deal as a manifestation of America's unwillingness to negotiate.

FAR EAST

The South Korean press warns against "appeasement" of the Soviet Union in any upcoming negotiations, but scattered Far East editorial comment stresses hope for U.N. mediation of the crisis. The press generally avoids commenting on any details of the latest Kennedy-Khrushchev-U Thant proposals.

Seoul papers, following a strong stand in support of the American position, now warn that the crisis must be settled without "appeasement." In an obvious reference to the Turkey-for-Cuba deal proposed by Khrushchev, the Seoul Sinmun of October 28 declares: "We must not yield an inch to either political deals by Russia in respect to U.S. overseas military bases, or to such problems as might involve the compensatory, challenging or retaliatory threats of Russia. The Communists know power only and surrender only to power."

Japanese papers continue to show increasing appreciation of the motivation behind U.S. policy, but insist that U.N. mediation efforts be given all support. Mainichi of October 28 developed this pattern of editorial thought, concluding: "Cuba should cease to build offensive missile bases while the United States, on its part, should not interfere with Cuba's freedom to conduct its own domestic affairs." Tokyo Shimbun, also on October 28, implicitly praised the U.S. blockade for having brought about support for U.N. observers in Cuba to "test Soviet sincerity." Sankei today expresses understanding and sympathy for U.S. actions, stating: "Why did the Soviets have to lie? The United States says lying and betrayal are the usual Soviet tactics. We too feel the same way." But all papers seem to share Mainichi's comment that "we place great anticipation in the U.N. efforts to end the crisis in Cuba."

A statement by influential Indonesian nationalist leader Ali Sastroamidjojo on October 27 lends support to U Thant's mediation efforts. He expresses pleasure that both the U.S. and the USSR have responded favorably. While the statement avoids extremes, Ali describes Indonesian support for the "territorial integrity of a free country" as well as for the abolition of "all military bases."

First reports from Phnom Penh, Cambodia, report critical editorials in the leftist, French-language Depecheon, October 25. The editorials criticize American bases abroad as more of a threat

to world peace than any in Cuba. The paper adds that Cuba is a "symbol" to the Asian-African peoples.

Peking releases its second authoritative editorial in the party paper, People's Daily, warning that the U.S. is now "ready for a direct armed aggression" on Cuba. The editorial does not mention the Soviet Union or Soviet bases, although previous coverage had alluded briefly to the presence of Soviet missile sites in Cuba. Today's editorial treats the crisis as one between Cuba's "seven million people," and the United States. As in its first editorial on the crisis, People's Daily says the major aim is to "suppress the national democratic movement throughout Latin America and the national liberation movement in Asia and Africa." The editorial pledges the support of the Chinese "people," but not official government support.

A large public rally on Cuba was held in Peking today, attended by Premier Chou En-lai, Foreign Minister Chen I, other prominent Chinese officials and Cuban diplomatic representatives -- but no Soviet delegates.

The New China News Agency reports the U.S. will take "further action" if the missile site construction continues, and notes the U.S. military build-up in Key West.

NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

Khrushchev's bases-swap proposal and the President's initial reply is still inconclusively covered in available reaction. Material on and leads to the assumption that the area's press and public opinion might welcome this indication that the wires are at least being kept open. Khrushchev's move comes at a time when particularly the Arab press has been playing up the need for the elimination of all military bases. Late UAR reviews indicate that the press anticipates a U.S. attack on Cuba. It also notes, according to radio reviews, both Khrushchev's offer of a bases swap and the President's rejection of the offer. Al Jumhuriya stressed world pressure for negotiations and asks plaintively: "Where is the United Nations?" The people of the countries involved, asserts the paper, should "shout in the face of their governments that they do not want war, at any cost."

America's NATO allies, however, have at least publicly expressed the belief that America firmness is the only key to an effective containment of Soviet aspirations.

The country most in the news, Turkey, has for the past few days insisted that there is no similarity between Soviet missiles in Cuba and NATO bases in Turkey, just as there have been comments that the bases in Turkey are not designed for aggression.

From Greece come some unofficial signs of sub-surface nervousness, though there has been extensive press, public and official support of the U.S. The "tough" Greek line was reflected in the pro-government Ethnikos Kyrix, which wrote, before the Khrushchev offer that "it would be a fatal error if President Kennedy accepted contact with Moscow's Red Dictator before clearing up, once and for all, the bearded tumor in Cuba."